

We Claim:

1. An automatic call distributor (ACD) for an internet based call center comprising:

5 receiving means to receive internet based inquiries and to derive from each inquiry relevant information regarding the nature of the inquiry;

a look up table in the ACD for storing data respecting skills and availability of agents on duty; and

10 means to match available agents having relevant skills with the inquiry and to pass the inquiry to a selected agent.

2. An ACD as defined in claim 1 further having means to place said inquiry on hold in the event that an agent having appropriate skills is not available.

15 3. An ACD as defined in claim 2 wherein said internet based inquiries include non real time voice inquiries, e-mail messages and facsimile transmissions.

4. A switch interface for use in a call center to route voice calls and internet based inquiries to appropriate agents comprising:

20 a voice based automatic call distributor (ACD) to route voice calls to respective agents according to predefined protocols;

an internet based ACD to route internet based inquiries to selected ones of said agents based on agent information stored in tables in said internet based ACD; and

25 means to designate certain agents as being unavailable when said certain agents are already occupied on a voice call or an internet based inquiry.

5. A switch interface as defined in claim 4 having means to receive voice calls via the PSTN and to receive internet based inquiries from clients over the Internet.

6. A switch interface as defined in claim 5 wherein routing of said voice calls is controlled by a PBX controller in association with said voice based ACD.

7. A switch interface as defined in claim 5 wherein routing of said internet based inquiries is controlled by a skills based router (SBR) in said internet based ACD.

8. A switch interface as defined in claim 7, wherein said PBX controller and said SBR include means to control the ratio of voice calls and internet based inquiries to said agents.

9. A switch interface as defined in claim 4 having means for said agents to log on to said voice based ACD and said internet based ACD.

10. A switch interface as defined in claim 4 having means to designate said certain agents as available upon completion of a voice call or an internet based inquiry

11. A method of integrating the routing of internet based inquiries with the routing of voice calls to appropriate agents at a call center employing a voice based automatic call distributor (ACD) comprising:

providing an internet based ACD at said call center, said internet based ACD maintaining a look up table containing agent information respecting skills and availability of said agents;

providing a switch interface to route both voice calls and internet inquiries to respective agents based on the skills and availability of said agents; and
providing means to remove an agent from a list of available agents when said agent is occupied on either a voice call or an internet based inquiry.

12. The method as defined in claim 11 wherein said agents log on as voice based agents and internet based agents when they are first available to receive a call.

13. The method as defined in claim 11 including the step of monitoring the ratio
5 of voice based calls and internet based inquiries each agent receives.

14. The method as defined in claim 13 wherein the ratio of voice based calls to internet based inquiries is variable.

10 15. The method as defined in claim 11 wherein said means to remove an agent from a list of available agents, returns said agent to an available list upon completion of the voice call or internet based inquiry.